



## **The Ottawa Connection**

*Connecting Richmond Hill to Ottawa*

**Newsletter - December 21, 2011**

### **Health Care Funding to Grow Under Sustainable Conservative Plan**

Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis confirmed December 21 that federal support for health care will continue to grow under a sustainable plan announced by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty.

"Our Government is committed to a strong, sustainable, universally accessible public health care system," said MP Menegakis. "This major, new investment increases federal funding for health care to new record highs and ensures funding for our health system continues to grow in a balanced and fiscally sustainable manner."

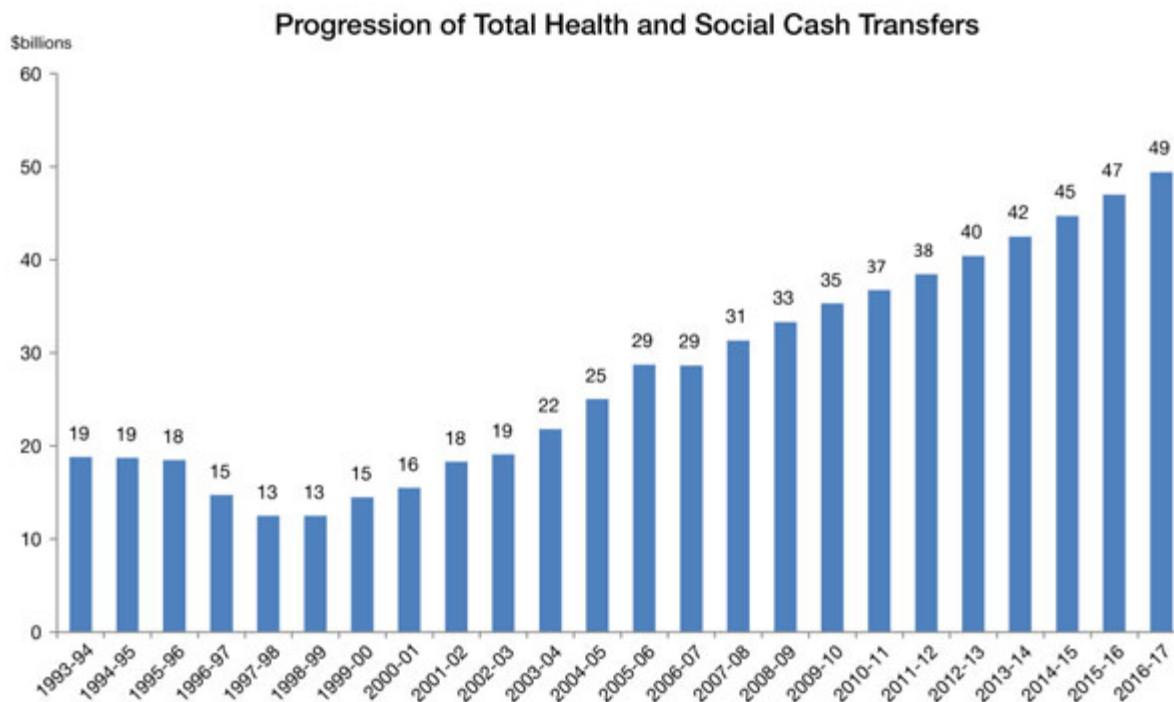
In 2012-13, Ontario will receive record high support through major federal transfers totalling \$19.2 billion - an increase of nearly \$8.4 billion (or 77%) from under the former Liberal government, including:

- Over \$3.2 billion through Equalization,
- Nearly \$11.4 billion through the Canada Health Transfer, an increase of over \$3.6 billion (or 48%) from under the former liberal government,
- \$4.6 billion through the Canada Social Transfer and increase of over \$1.4 billion (or 45%) from under the former liberal government.

Under the new long-term plan, health care transfers will increase from \$30 billion per year in 2013-14 to more than \$38 billion per year in 2018-19. Over that five year period total funding for health care will be at least \$178 billion.

Starting in 2017-18 further increases in health transfers will be tied to the growth in Canada's economy as measured by nominal Gross Domestic Product which is estimated at over 4% per year. To ensure predictability, the Conservative Government has guaranteed that transfers will grow at a minimum rate of 3% per year.

"Linking the growth in health care transfers to the growth in the economy will ensure our Canadian health care system remains sustainable," said Menegakis. "Ontario will have the stability it needs over the next five years while it looks to improve how health care services are delivered."



Source: Finance Canada Calculations.

## **Welcoming Royal Assent of Bill C-13, the *Keeping Canada's Jobs and Economy Growing Act***

Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis welcomed the Royal Assent on December 16, 2011 of Bill C-13, the *Keeping Canada's Economy & Jobs Growing Act*. The legislation includes key elements of the Next Phase of Canada's Economic Action Plan - A Low-Tax Plan for Jobs and Growth.

"Our Government remains focused on what matters most to Richmond Hill residents and to all Canadians - creating jobs and encouraging economic growth," said MP Menegakis. "Measures in this act will assist job creation, help families, support communities and respect taxpayers."

The Keeping Canada's Economy & Jobs Growing Act will do the following:

### **Job Creation & Economic Growth**

- Provide a temporary Hiring Credit for Small Business to encourage additional hiring,
- Expand tax support for clean energy generation to encourage green investments,
- Simplify customs tariffs in order to facilitate trade and lower the administrative burden for businesses,
- Extend the accelerated capital cost allowance treatment for investments in manufacturing and processing machinery and equipment for two years to support the manufacturing and processing sector,
- Eliminate the mandatory retirement age for federally regulated employees in order to give older workers wishing to work the option of remaining in the workforce.

### **Supporting Communities**

- Legislate permanent annual funding of \$2 billion for the Gas Tax Fund for predictable, long-term infrastructure support to municipalities including nearly \$5 million each year for Richmond Hill,
- Enhance the Wage Earner Protection Program to cover more workers affected by employer bankruptcy or receivership,
- Introduce a Volunteer Firefighters Tax Credit for volunteer firefighters,
- Increase the integrity of the charitable sector to provide more confidence by introducing a package of integrity measures designed to help combat fraud and other forms of abuse.

### **Helping Families**

- Introduce a new Family Caregiver Tax Credit to assist caregivers of all types of infirm dependent relatives,
- Remove the limit on the amount of eligible expenses caregivers can claim under the Medical Expense Tax Credit in respect of financially dependent relatives,
- Introduce a new Children's Arts Tax Credit for programs associated with children's artistic, cultural, recreational and developmental activities.

### **Investing in Education and Training**

- Forgive loans for new doctors and nurses in under-served rural and remote areas,
- Help apprentices in the skilled trades and workers in regulated professions by making occupational, trade and professional examination fees eligible for the Tuition Tax Credit,
- Improve federal financial assistance for students,
- Make it easier to allocate Registered Education Savings Plan assets among siblings, without incurring tax penalties or forfeiting Canada Education Savings Grants.

## Respecting Taxpayers

- Phase out the direct subsidy of political parties,
- Close numerous tax loopholes that allow a few businesses and individuals to avoid paying their fair share of tax.

“As we prepare for next year’s budget, I am pleased to provide Richmond Hill residents with a forum to allow a direct say on how they would like their tax dollars spent,” said MP Menegakis. “I invite everyone to submit their Budget 2012 priorities and suggestions at my Pre-Budget Consultation meeting on January 11th from 7-9 p.m. at Alexander Mackenzie High School.” All feedback received from MP Costas Menegakis’ pre-budget consultation process will be presented to the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Minister of Finance. For more information please call 905-770-4440 or email [Costas.Menegakis.C1@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Costas.Menegakis.C1@parl.gc.ca). The constituency office is located at 9555 Yonge Street, Suite 400, in Richmond Hill.

### **Backgrounder: MP Costas Menegakis Speaks on Bill C-13 in the House of Commons November 16, 2011:**

[http://costasmenegakis.ca/media\\_/riding-news/costas-stands-up-in-the-house-for-richmond-hill-on-bill-c-13](http://costasmenegakis.ca/media_/riding-news/costas-stands-up-in-the-house-for-richmond-hill-on-bill-c-13).

## **1st Annual Richmond Hill Holiday Meet N' Greet a Great Success!**

The Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts was brimming with Christmas spirit and holiday cheer at MP Costas Menegakis' first annual Richmond Hill Holiday Meet N' Greet on December 18th.

"It was wonderful to meet so many residents, to say hello and share the spirit of the season together," said MP Menegakis. Senator Don Meredith, Richmond Hill M.P.P. Reza Moridi, Deputy Mayor Vito Spatafora, Ward 2 Councillor Carmine Perrelli, Ward 6 Councillor Godwin Chan and former Richmond Hill Mayor Bill Bell were a few of the dignitaries stopping by with their best wishes for the season.

MP Menegakis gave his year-end remarks in front of a packed crowd. "I would like to wish everyone and their families the very best this Christmas and holiday season," said MP Menegakis. "This time of year provides an opportunity to reflect on everything we have to be thankful for and to reach out to those less fortunate. It is also an opportunity to remember our brave men and women in uniform who are defending Canadian values around the world, spending this Christmas away from their loved ones. Whatever your plans are for the holidays, I hope you enjoy time spent with family and friends and that your festive celebrations are happy and relaxing."

Residents had an opportunity to hear an update on the government's accomplishments after a long and productive fall session of Parliament.

“Friends, my seat in Parliament belongs to you, the people of Richmond Hill. I am honoured to be representing your interests in Ottawa and I will continue to do so each and every day with the dedication and commitment you deserve,” said MP Menegakis. “Under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper your government has been working hard at implementing the mandate we received on May 2<sup>nd</sup> when Canadians asked us to continue to focus on jobs and the economy, proceed with our crime legislation to keep our streets safe and to support our communities.”



*Left to right: Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis, Gail Menegakis, Michelle Meredith, Senator Don Meredith*

MP Menegakis highlighted the passage of Bill C-13, the *Keeping Canada's Jobs and Economy Growing Act*. “After thorough debate and over 100 speeches, I am pleased that Bill C-13, our Budget 2011 legislation, finally received royal assent,” added MP Menegakis.

The legislation brings in among other measures a temporary Hiring Credit for Small Business, expands tax support to encourage green investment, legislates \$2 billion permanent funding for municipalities, worth nearly \$5 million each and every year for Richmond Hill, introduces a new Family Caregiver Tax Credit, increases the Medical Expense Tax Credit and introduces a new Children's Arts Tax Credit. Financial assistance to students has been improved, additional help for apprentices in the skilled trades and workers in regulated professions provided, direct subsidies to political parties will begin to be phased out and tax loopholes have been closed.

MP Menegakis also announced that plans for the celebration of The Queen's Diamond Jubilee—the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Her Majesty's accession to the throne as Queen of Canada, are underway. “The only other time Canada celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of a reigning sovereign was for Queen Victoria in 1897,” said MP Menegakis. “By supporting this most historic and significant anniversary, our Government is delivering on its commitment to reinforce our heritage through active celebration of our institutions that define who we are as Canadians.”

Residents heard that the constituency office continues to be busy, helping constituents with issues such as those involving Canada Revenue Agency, Canadian Citizenship and Immigration and Canada Post.

“I would like remind all residents of the numerous services available to them through their Member of Parliament’s office,” said MP Menegakis. “Congratulatory certificates for special occasions, Canada pins for special visitors or trips abroad or tickets to Question Period when Parliament is in session can all be arranged through my office.”

“Looking ahead, I invite everyone to attend my next Meet N’ Greet, a Pre-Budget Consultation meeting, on January 11 from 7-9 p.m. at Alexander Mackenzie High School. This will be your chance to share your priorities for next year and to let your government know how you would like your tax dollars spent.”

“Merry Christmas everyone and from my family to yours, all the best in the New Year,” concluded MP Menegakis.

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## Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

In 2012, Canada will mark the 60th anniversary of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II as Queen of Canada. The Queen has dedicated her entire life to the service of others and has always held this country and all Canadians in the deepest of pride and affection. The only other time Canada celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of a reigning sovereign was for Queen Victoria in 1897. By supporting this most historic and significant anniversary, our Government is delivering on its commitment to reinforce our heritage through active celebration of our institutions that define who we are as Canadians. In celebrating Her Majesty The Queen and the institution of the Canadian Crown (The Queen, the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governors) in this Diamond Jubilee Year, we also celebrate her ideals and dedication to service as an example to us all.

For further information on the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and community celebrations visit <http://www.pch.gc.ca/eng/1323011380156/>.



## New Initiative Helps Protect Children Travelling Abroad

The Honourable Diane Ablonczy, Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas and Consular Affairs) has announced the launch of an interactive consent letter for children travelling abroad. This safe-travel resource is intended to make it easier for children to travel while preventing their abduction to foreign countries. It was developed in response to the needs of parents, legal professionals and consular officials. Parents will now be able to compose a clear and concise letter simply by filling out a form.

The consent letter for children travelling abroad, along with information on other aspects of foreign travel, may be found at [www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca).

## Pre-Budget Consultation Meeting January 11, 2012

Richmond Hill MP Costas Menegakis hosts a 2012 Pre-Budget Consultation meeting to allow residents a direct say in the formation of the next federal budget. This is an excellent opportunity to let your government know how you would like to see your federal tax dollars spent! Oral and written comments will be accepted at the meeting. If you wish to make a presentation, please register ahead of time by phone at 905.770.4440 or email at [Costas.Menegakis.C1@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Costas.Menegakis.C1@parl.gc.ca). The meeting takes place Wednesday, January 11 from 7-9 p.m. at Alexander Mackenzie High School, 300 Major Mackenzie Drive West, across from York Central Hospital. All are welcome to attend!

**Costas Menegakis, M.P.**

**Member of Parliament for Richmond Hill**

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