

# SMALL BUSINESS UNDER PRESSURE

In 2021, small businesses in Canada employed 8.2 million people, or 67.7% of the total private labour force. By comparison, medium-sized businesses employed 2.5 million people (20.4%), and large businesses employed 1.4 million people (11.8%) [Source: Government of Canada]. Yet, rather than encouraging small business, this government is instead enlarging the public service, which has grown by 30.7% since they took office in 2015 (not including the explosive growth in outside contractors). That is the opposite of how to promote prosperity and create well paying middle class jobs across the country.

## Tax on Beer, Wine and Spirits Still Going Up



In March, the government announced the excise tax on beer, wine and spirits would increase by 2% instead of the 4.75% which their yearly automatic increase required. They called this "tax relief".

Increasing taxes by 2% instead of 4.75% is not "support" or "relief". It's a

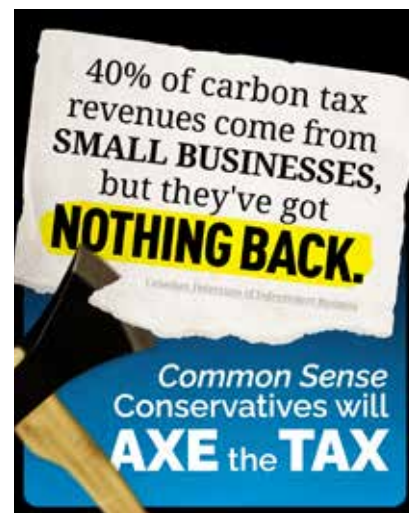
tax increase. And it's the 8th annual one in a row without a vote by elected MPs.

My Private Member's Bill C-266 would support brewers, vintners, distillers, restaurants, retailers and millions of cash strapped consumers, while returning the power to set taxes where it belongs - with MPs accountable to voters, by scrapping the automatic annual increase and making MPs vote on each and every tax hike again.

## Carbon Tax Hardest on Small Business

Another hit to small businesses came with the 23% increase to the carbon tax on April 1st.

When the tax was first introduced, the government promised businesses that they would get something back (not cash rebates like



**Madam Speaker, after eight years, the NDP-Liberal government is going to raise the tax on beer, wine and spirits, again on April 1st for the eighth year in a row. Most Canadians can barely afford to eat, heat and house themselves and we know that this Prime Minister is not worth the cost. Our brewers, vintners and distillers know that the current government is harming their industries. For once, will the Liberals cancel this year's undemocratic automatic tax increase, and bring back happy hour for Canadians?**

*Pat Kelly, MP - House of Commons, Feb 16 2024*

consumers, but at least some helpful programs they could apply for).

That did not happen.

Small businesses pay 40% of the carbon tax revenue, but they get nothing back. They are forced to either absorb the cost (on top of their other inflationary costs and taxes), or else pass it along to consumers - customers like you.

**House to House**  
Report from Parliament

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## THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING MY OPEN HOUSE

During my public Open House on January 19th (right), dozens of people talked to me about a variety of concerns. Thank you everyone who took the time to attend. Feedback from Calgarians is very important to me and informs the work I do on your behalf in Ottawa.

*Pat Kelly*



## TRIBUTE TO BRIAN MULRONEY

Brian Mulroney transformed the Canadian economy by unleashing the energy industry, welcoming foreign investment, restoring public finances and negotiating the original Free Trade Agreement with the United States that saved this country from the downward spiral that had been set in motion by the government that had come before it.



**"I am so glad that he lived long enough to see the undeniable proof of his legacy as a great world leader and a transformational Canadian prime minister whose legacy endures. Rest well, Brian Mulroney, with a grateful nation's thanks. Posterity is already much kinder to you than your contemporaries were."**

*Pat Kelly, MP - House of Commons, March 19, 2024*



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# DEFENCE DEPARTMENT IN DISARRAY

As a member of the Standing Committee on National Defence, I have numerous opportunities to question the Minister, DND officials and experts about the wide range of challenges facing our troops. Here are some of the issues I have raised:

- Minister Bill Blair and the Department of National Defence (DND) have an appalling record on Access to Information (ATIP) requests. This affects morale among Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members. For example, those who are medically discharged, or have sexual assault complaints, can't get the benefits they are entitled to because they can't get the required paperwork;
- This government continues to break its 2015 election promise to be "the most open and transparent government in Canadian history." 40% of ATIP requests are not answered within 30 days as required by law. DND tabled a report that said there are just three outstanding requests more than five years old, but Conservative MP James Bezan revealed that his office alone has four that are between five and seven years old;



- Lack of access to housing is driving people out of the CAF. The Liberals tried to blame the Treasury Board, but personnel don't care which Liberal minister is to blame for raising their rent. Minister Blair still denies that there are homeless CAF members in Halifax. The DND and CAF Ombudsman, Gregory Lick, disagrees - the evidence is overwhelming;
- The same company that was paid millions for the ill-fated ArriveCAN app - GC Strategies - also got contracts from DND (some sole sourced) with no transparency about work done. The President of the Union of National Defence Employees claims there is no oversight on contracts, and no way to know what is causing the ballooning costs. ATIP requests go unanswered or are redacted. 🍁



- A cyberattack in September shut down the CAF re-location system for weeks. Our troops and their families constantly move from base to base and rely on time sensitive re-location services. MPs heard from CAF members who couldn't access their keys, couldn't access their sale proceeds, and couldn't report to their new assignments on time. Beyond those logistical obstacles, thousands are left to wonder if their personal information is now being peddled on the dark web;



◀ On March 16 I attended a busy Citadel Small Business Trade show featuring great local businesses hosted by the Citadel Community Association.

▶ I spoke at "Remembering the Halabja Massacre" on the anniversary of Saddam Hussein's gas attack that killed 5,000 Kurdish civilians in 1988, hosted by Calgary Kurdish House - Mala Kurd.



◀ On Feb 10 I participated in the Calgary Chinese Cultural Centre's Chinese New Year Festival. I also attended and spoke at the Chinatown BIA Lunar New Year - 2024 Year of the Dragon Gala - on Feb 24.

Gong hei fat choy and Xin nian kuai le to those celebrating the Year of the Dragon!



▲ On the tragic anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I joined Calgarians and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress - UCC Calgary Branch at City Hall. Slava Ukraini!



◀ On a chilly, snowy morning I attended the Arbour Lake Residents Association 2024 Law Enforcement Torch Run Polar Plunge for Special Olympics Alberta. Thank you to everyone who braved the cold to participate in this wonderful cause: Freezin' For A Reason.



▲ On Feb 11 I participated in the Kincora land acknowledgment blessing and smudging ceremony for the Kincora gazebo by Noella Wells, an Aboriginal Elder from the Piikani Nation, alongside Kincora residents, Councillor Jennifer Wyness, and the community and residents' associations.

This celebrated the revitalization of the gazebo and updated information panels to include Indigenous land heritage, geographical and geological information about the area.



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