

Prime Minister Harper's introduction of his income splitting plan this week has shed some light on a fundamental difference in thinking between staunch conservatives and others. In Facebook and Twitter conversations, it is clear that the beneficiaries of this scheme view it primarily as dealing with an inequity in the income tax system, wherein one person who earns \$100,000 per year pays more in taxes than a couple who each earn \$50,000. To those conservatives, this is not a matter of providing relief to lower income families - they point to other measures such as the increase in the monthly child benefit for children under six by 60% (to \$160 per month), and \$60 per month for children 6 to 17. They also argue against the point that the income splitting plan is expensive - 'we're just getting back our own money'. Liberals and others note that of the \$2.7 billion for income splitting, over 60% will go to families where a single earner makes over \$100,000 a year; over 87% will be men and the largest share will go to Alberta.

An Ekos poll last week showed the Conservatives narrowing the gap with the Liberals and pulling ahead of the NDP. The credit for this was given to the support voiced by most Canadians for our military action in the Middle East.

There were more considerations about the motives behind the attack on Parliament Hill, with observers looking at the anti-terrorism measures going forward vs. the growing evidence that a key factor was the perpetrator's mental issues. Lost to a large degree was the conviction of ex-Conservative MP Dean Del Mastro on charges of overspending on his 2008 election campaign.

Our messages to the public:

Income Splitting

Middle class families should not have to pay more to give families like the Prime Minister's a \$2,000 tax break.

The Conservative's income splitting plan favours the wealthy, is bad for growth, and is bad for the middle class.

As the Parliamentary Budget Officer and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives have pointed out, income splitting will only benefit a slim minority of Canadians.

Canada must do a better job of ensuring that new tax policies help the middle class and families at the lower end of the income spectrum. It is unfair to ask middle class families to pay for this tax break.

We agree with the late former Finance Minister, Jim Flaherty, who said that the Prime Minister's income splitting proposal is unlikely to be very beneficial for the vast majority of Canadians or the middle class. It should come as no surprise that Liberals oppose this policy.

Click on the link to view and share Mr. Trudeau's [statement](#) on the income splitting announcement.

Items of interest from the news and the party:

-The Globe & Mail's news item on income splitting:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/harper-unveils-income-splitting-tax-cut-expands-monthly-child-benefit/article21386549/>

-National Post columnist Andrew Coyne supports the government's income splitting scheme:

<http://ww2.nationalpost.com/m/wp/blog.html?b=fullcomment.nationalpost.com%2F2014%2F10%2F31%2Fandrew-coyne-as-a-work-around-to-a-true-flat-tax-system-you-could-do-worse-than-harpers-income-splitting-benefit>

-An op-ed in the Globe & Mail begs to differ:

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-debate/income-splitting-wont-help-parents-who-really-need-a-tax-break/article21382476/?click=sf_globefb#dashboard/follows/

-Although the Conservatives' income splitting plan was watered down from that originally proposed, the Toronto Star remained unimpressed:

http://www.thestar.com/opinion/editorials/2014/10/30/harpers_income_splitting_li_te_is_still_a_bad_idea_editorial.html

-The Prime Minister's position on terrorism may well save him:

<http://www.ipolitics.ca/2014/10/21/harpers-hail-mary-fighting-an-election-over-terrorism/>

-Former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page remains as tough on the Conservatives and Mr. Harper as the current PBO:

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/metro/1247855-former-pbo-kevin-page-ottawa-is-putinesque>

-As speculated, Ontario's municipal elections were successful for a number of liberal-leaning mayoralty candidates, with John Tory's win in Toronto seen as giving signals for the upcoming federal campaign:

<http://www.hilltimes.com/new-communications/politics/2014/11/03/toronto-mayoralty-race-a-lesson-for-federal-election/40109>

As always, you'll find much more on our Seniors Commission Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bclibs/>

Looking ahead:

There are two by-elections scheduled on November 17th in Whitby-Oshawa (formerly held by the late Jim Flaherty) and Yellowhead. Justin Trudeau has been spending time in both ridings and will address the Hinton Chamber of Commerce plus attend a campaign event in Edson on Thursday.