

Tax Changes Will Hurt Small Businesses

Dear MP

Intro paragraph

Over the summer, the federal Finance Department has made it clear that it intends to make the most sweeping changes to business taxes in 50 years.

From my perspective, as a business owner, I want you to know how this is going to affect my business. (Please share your businesses story into the space below)

e.g.

(This is an example that received by the Canadian Chamber; please update with your own impact story)

I am a tax partner in Thunder Bay, Ontario (but have practiced across Canada) and I grew up in a small business. In fact, my family's business is now in its 3rd generation and is now run by my sister and brother. Many of your insights reflect my family's reality in running a business. It is a family affair. I had no choice but to work in our family business starting at the age of 7 years old. I was not paid a reasonable wage, in fact, many of my hours working in the business were unpaid as my family struggled to make ends meet while they ran a business, and raised a young family and my father suffered with a terminal illness. When I turned 16, I was offered a job to work at Eaton at an hourly wage higher than what I was paid in our family business, but I was forbidden to do so by my father and uncle who relied on me to help the business survive as they could not afford to pay me what Eaton paid. Our family business struggled for many years and it was on the verge of bankruptcy multiple times. My family depended on me to help them make ends meet and the business to survive. I am not alone. The same was true of my sister, my brother, my cousins and my aunts and uncles. Today the business is very successful, but it came at a cost. We did not have expensive vacations, or even vacations by today's standards at all. My father would open the store on Christmas day to help the family that forgot to buy the Christmas turkey. My parents told me they could not afford to send me to university and that I would need to earn scholarships to do so. I attended university and worked in our family business at the same time. My sister and brother did not attend university. They ran the business with my mom after my father died at a young age. How would the government have measured our "contribution" to the success of our family business? My T4 would have suggested that I made little or no contribution. Yet I know that to be false.

So that you have a snapshot of my business, here's some information:

The number of people I employ:

The type of business:

I started this business in...

My customer base is... e.g. mostly local...

My supplier base is... e.g. mostly local/Canadian/etc.

Summary Paragraph

Nobody supports tax evasion or loopholes. But these changes will punish legitimate businesses like mine.

I am particularly upset because this government has said it is committed to providing new opportunities for SMEs to grow. My business and many others like mine are the backbone of many communities – my community included. Our businesses employ citizens; our businesses support local initiatives – everything from soccer teams to fundraising drives for refugee families. If these changes go through, our local businesses, including mine, will no longer have the capacity for these community activities. I understand that draft legislation is in place concerning these changes.

I urge the government to put these changes on hold to avoid hurting thousands of small businesses across the country and to have a broader, thoughtful discussion regarding the measures needed to stop those who use their businesses to avoid paying taxes.