

5 Reasons to Oppose this Federal Budget Bill

Bill C-38 is absolutely the turning point in the history of this country and the fault line that will determine the future of this country... I urge all Canadians to go and understand that silence is not an option. We all have a duty and an obligation to our grandchildren and their grandchildren to speak out against this legislation.(1)

~ Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Union of BC Indian Chiefs

The people are asking, "What is this government up to?" We're not stupid, we the people. We don't understand why you have to roll this all into one bill and ramrod it through Parliament.... This is unbecoming of the Conservative party to which I belonged.(2)

~ Honourable Tom Siddon, Former Progressive Conservative Cabinet Minister

1. This Bill is bad for democracy.

By giving Prime Minister Harper and cabinet sweeping new powers, Bill C-38 would make it even easier for PM Harper and his Ministers to decide the future of our country on their own. Unless s/he is one of 39 cabinet ministers, your Conservative MP is likely being silenced, and won't represent your voice in this process – unless you encourage him or her to speak out. This situation will only get worse if this bill passes.

2. This Bill threatens our economic and social security.

The Parliamentary Budget Officer says that this budget could cost 43,000 Canadian jobs.(3) Seniors would be prevented from accessing old age security support payments for 2 more years, and employment insurance would be more difficult to get for those in need. This bill would make our economy dependent on exporting oil, exploiting natural resources, and taking advantage of low wage earners.

3. This Bill takes a reckless approach to the environment.

The Bill seeks to deny the words of Prime Minister Harper's own Governor General David Johnston: "Our desire for a modern economy and our duty to a sustainable environment are not mutually exclusive — they are mutually reinforcing."(4)

The National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy will be shut down. Oil pipelines would be exempt from special laws to protect our water. PM Harper and his Ministers would have power to override expert decisions about energy use, to shorten the list of protected species, and to abolish the Kyoto Protocol Implementation Act.(5) The economic vision of this bill depends on a smash-and-grab approach to our natural resources.

4. This Bill attacks science and public information.

Bill C-38 proposes changes that will weaken our ability to hold government accountable.

More scientists would lose their jobs as a result of this budget, particularly those who monitor our oceans.(6) Studies of Canadian water use, social assistance and welfare, and data to measure progress in addressing the needs of First Nations would be eliminated. The budget would cut funding to Elections Canada as it investigates electoral fraud.

The Budget Bill not only proposes dramatic changes – it would also make it more difficult for us to understand whether or not those changes are in our best interest.

5. This Bill is the wrong way to make these decisions.

Omnibus bills lump dozens of unrelated and crucial changes into a single yes or no vote. In 1994, Prime Minister Harper himself said he was opposed to omnibus bills: "*In the interest of democracy I ask: How can members represent their constituents on these various areas when they are forced to vote in a block on such legislation and on such concerns?... How do we express our views and the views of our constituents when the matters are so diverse?*"(7)

Before PM Harper and his Ministers took power, budget bills averaged 74 pages. Bill C-38 is 452 pages long. This makes it easy for Canadians to miss short amendments with far-reaching implications. 10 words would wipe out an entire law regarding fair wages and overtime. This is not the way to make major decisions about the direction of our country.

By working together, 13 Conservative MPs can make sure Prime Minister Harper and his cabinet have to change plans or lose the support of the majority of votes in Parliament they need to pass the Budget Bill.

More and more Canadians, including many conservatives, are rallying to defend our democracy and stand together against the Federal Budget Bill.

Sources:

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4. <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/editorials/even-a-moderate-environmental-body-now-must-die/article4198144/>
5. <http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2012/04/30/andrew-coyne-bill-c-38-shows-us-how-far-parliament-has-fallen/>
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