



Julie Dzerowicz
Member of Parliament / Députée
Davenport



February 14, 2024

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Via email

Deputy Prime Minister Freeland,

The people of Davenport have spoken. Every year, I ask the Davenport residents what they believe our budget priorities should be for the upcoming year. This year, we received hundreds of responses to our mailed constituency piece. This letter is a summary of my constituents' recommendations for the 2024 federal budget.

The issues that are top of mind for my riding include: housing and the cost of living; the environment; healthcare; education; arts and culture; working with Indigenous communities towards reconciliation; and mending divisions to maintain safer communities.

Housing. Davenport residents are happy to see our federal government's generous contributions to the City of Toronto for co-op, rental, and other housing options. They encourage us to ensure that CMHC makes it easier for our non-profits to create more deeply affordable housing spaces. The number of homeless people in Toronto is heartbreaking – we are following Finland's Housing First model to find a safe place to house our most vulnerable. Small developers in Davenport have asked for the federal government to step up with federally backed low interest loans to build mid-rise and low-rise buildings. Finally, Davenport residents believe there needs to be a review of federal commercial lands in the hands of our crown corporations (e.g., Canada Post lands). There is a crisis of housing and affordability in Canada – Davenport believes we need to reconsider how all federal lands can be used to address these issues and to address local community needs.

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Food prices. The residents of Davenport request that our federal government continue to look at ways to address the high grocery prices and ways to tackle the oligopolies that we have in the food sector (indeed, in many sectors). More competition will be good for affordability and will give Canadians more choices.

Small business support. Small businesses are truly the backbone of Canadian economy – and key to the health of local and city economies. Davenport has asked that we look at creative ways to support Canadian small businesses by eliminating red tape, offering tax breaks, and encouraging investment. As well, we must ensure we are filling the skill and labour needs of our small businesses so that they are able to grow their business. The Davenport riding has many excellent microbreweries who have been advocating for the alcohol excise tax increase to remain capped at 2%, ideally for the next two years. Davenport wants to see small businesses succeed – they are key to our future national prosperity.

Healthcare is also a primary concern for Davenport. Residents are troubled by the increasing privatization of the healthcare system and want our federal government to tackle this with all our power and might. Davenport residents are also asking for the federal government to ensure maximum transparency and flexibility for the significant federal investments we have made in health care in Ontario. Many do not believe that the Ontario government is appropriately allocating and spending the dollars we have given them for more doctors, pay increases for nurses, mental health supports, and so much more.

Climate Action. Moving as quickly and as aggressively as possible to a low-carbon future and to net zero by 2050 is the key message from Davenport residents. More specifically, they are requesting a clear plan to reduce fossil fuel emissions, getting the electricity grid up and running, and implementing new programs that will help Canadians to decarbonize. Davenport wants to see Canada transition to a robust and resilient low-carbon green economy.

Arts and culture are critical to the social cohesion of Canadians, to our ability to understand each other (across this great land), and to interpret the world around us. Davenport has many residents that are artists, innovators, or who work in the cultural sector. It is critical that we fund our artists and our cultural sector – including the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), small

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and big art galleries, theatres, and dance companies, among others. Also, it is critical to continue to fund our organisations such as REEL Canada, the Canada Music Fund, the Canada Media Fund, and the Local Journalism Initiative. As the whole sector transitions to a new profitability model, funding our print media and the journalist tax credit for broadcasters (radio and TV) is critical. Transitions are expensive – it is vital we support independent, fact-based Canadian journalism. Our strength and future depend on this.

Davenport residents are huge advocates for the implementation of the **Canada Disability Benefit** and a guaranteed basic income. They continue to share how much these measures would improve their lives.

My constituents also underscored how important it is to ensure that **Indigenous communities** in Canada have clean water and adequate housing. They urge the federal government to continue to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls recommendations, as well as to continue eliminating long-term drinking water advisories.

Thank you for taking the time to consider Davenport's requests.

My very best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie".

Julie Dzerowicz
Member of Parliament – Davenport

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Appendix A: Direct quotes from Davenport residents

- “There will be zero economy if we are all dead [from climate change].”
- “The government should start building affordable housing. There are very few options for housing for families who are not wealthy. We are a family with 3 children and we live in a one bedroom apartment.”
- “Focus on affordable rent & regulating mortgage prices (impossible dream to own a home).”
- “Every Canadian citizen deserves a decent and affordable place to live.”
- “Stop grocery giants from freely raising prices and running record profits -- must be consequences for their greed.”
- “Divesting from oil – growth should not always be the goal.”
- “Environment = taking heat right now but press on!”
- “More and improved settlement and employment programs for new immigrants and refugees.”
- “My autistic son would benefit greatly from beginning distribution of the Canada Disability Benefit as soon as possible.”

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