

For Immediate Release

February 26, 2010

Stephen Harper breaks promise not to raise taxes – again

OTTAWA - With the announcement of a new tax on air travellers, the Harper Conservatives continue to punish Canadians for the mistakes they've made with our nation's finances that have led us to a record deficit, Liberal MPs said today.

"This is a government that says one thing and does another," said Liberal Transport Critic Joe Volpe. "Their financial bungling is what gave us this huge deficit, and this is how they deal with it – by putting it on the backs of Canadians.

"Transport Minister John Baird can try to call it whatever he wants, but it is still a tax, and these hikes are coming straight out of Canadians' pockets."

The latest tax increase comes in the form of increased fees for air travellers as the Conservatives try to recoup some of the \$1.5 billion they say they are spending on airport security over the next five years. The move follows a \$13-billion hike in Employment Insurance premiums.

"Liberals agree that airport security is a priority and that security comes with a cost. However, the Conservatives need to tell the truth," said Mr. Volpe. "If the Conservatives want to raise taxes to pay for their record deficit, they should say it – instead they are treating Canadians like fools."

Liberal Finance Critic John McCallum pointed out that if the new Air Travellers Security Charge was truly a user fee, the money raised would be going to the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority, not into the government's general revenue fund.

"And because Mr. Harper prorogued Parliament, there is no Parliamentary or committee consultation to provide oversight for this decision or on air security in general," he said. "He has essentially announced a budgetary decision before tabling his budget. It's just another example of how this unaccountable government operates. Canadians have had enough. First EI premiums, now airport taxes – what's next?"

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